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# Difference between one year MBA programme and Executive MBA programme

One year MBA and Executive MBA both are full time residential programmes and are offered by the best of Indian management schools.

This allusion of Juliet gives us the classic one liner, 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet'. A modern day echo of this Shakespearean wisdom is the nomenclature game of 'One year MBA' vs. 'Executive MBA'. Both variants are full time residential programs and are offered by the best of Indian management schools. Neither of them admit the raw graduating student -- 'fresher' by industry parlance. Most of the schools offer campus placements, whether the programme is called 'One year MBA' or 'Executive MBA'.

The duration of both the programmes is typically 12 months (some schools take it to 15 months to create a marginal differentiation).

## Difference in nomenclature

With such a lot of similarities, why a difference in nomenclature? The answer takes us back to the early 1990s when this country ushered in her economic reforms. Through the nineties, when India was accelerating from a 3 per cent growth rate to a healthier 6-8 per cent growth, jobs were still scarce to come by. This led the bright just-out-of-college kid to seek the value-add of a full-fledged two-year MBA degree. Iconic management institutions filled that gap with the prestigious IIMs leading the pack. Two year MBA was the norm and the word 'Executive' had currency only in work places, not classrooms.

With the birth of the new millennium, markets opened up to a plethora of job opportunities. The blue-eyed kids filling the base of the industry pyramid suddenly found themselves hitting a glass ceiling in terms of knowledge and skill sets. New knowledge areas like analytics, digital marketing and social media management (to name a few) were opening up. What the 90s kids had learned back in college would take them only up to a point. NO MORE. When this realisation dawned, a new inflow of MBA aspirants started. They all wore the tag -- 'seen industry, now getting back to school'.

Necessity mothers all new inventions. Schools like ISB and Great Lakes were born at the turn of the millennium to specifically cater to the 'back to school' student. This new MBA admittee -- a manager in some sense -- just required quick reskilling before getting back to work. This market requirement gave birth to the 'One-Year MBA'. New B-Schools which started without any legacy association with the traditional two year format had no problem in naming their new 12 month offering as 'One-Year MBA'.

Success spawns imitation. With the 12 month format gathering steam, the traditional two year MBA schools did a straddle strategy. They soft-launched their fast track version while holding on to their flagship two year MBA offering. To maintain a differential edge both from the new 'one-year' schools (competition) and from their own traditional 2 year offering (cannibalization), these schools reached out to the 'minimum 5 years' experience' student market. Continuing on differentiation, the traditional schools added the tag 'Executive' to their offering. Thus, the new inflow of 'back to school' MBA aspirants got divided into two buckets -- 'One year MBA' and 'Executive MBA'.

Getting back to Juliet, there is nothing to differentiate between the two Romeos (pun intended)! The so-called differences have been highlighted by education websites, authors, brand specialists and finally the media. From a school's viewpoint all these are outside-in perspectives. This author is a full time professor and hence gives an inside-out perspective. If one really wants to differentiate the two student cohorts (a personal take from this author who has headed B-School Admissions for over a decade), then here it goes. One year MBAs are typically 4-5 years younger than their Executive MBA counterparts. Campus activities and social networking are as important to them as academics. They are mostly not married ('committed' would be their typical Facebook notation). Almost all of them are millennials and bring with them the associated metaphors.

On the other hand the EMA cohort is more mature, tempered, mostly married and on the verge of upper-middle management. Since the group has only a lower age limit, the seniors within the group are already in middle management. Both groups are ambitious and raring to go and together, they will build India 2025.

***(Authored article by Dr Easwar Krishna Iyer, Associate Professor (Marketing), Great Lakes Institute of Management)***

Online - <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/mba/1/1052695.html>